



# BULLETIN OF THE ORIENTAL ESOTERIC CENTER

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## OPPORTUNITY

"There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

The great majority of men upon whom fortune has not smiled bewail their lack of opportunity, either aloud or in the silence of their own heart. If only they had been placed in some other position than the one they occupy, how different their life would have been! How much good they could have done if only they had had the means possessed by some more fortunate neighbor. . . . "It is easy to be righteous on ten thousand a year!"

On the other hand there is a small minority of men who, although placed in adverse conditions, make use of them to rise, and to win for themselves respect, greater or less ease of circumstances, and even honor and renown.

The difference between these two classes of men is not in their beginnings—these are often identical, or they may even favor the first class; but it is in the power they possess of recognizing and embracing an opportunity.

It will be seen at once that this power, as viewed with regard to "the affairs of men" is a very important one—perhaps the most important, and therefore well worth study and endeavor. As we look deeper, moreover, we discover that it is also due to a spiritual force of character and it is found to rest upon definite laws of

thought. If it is essential to ensure success to worldly projects, much more may this law of "opportunity" be studied and put to the proof in the furtherance of our spiritual advancement.

There are two essentials to grasping an opportunity—*sight* and *will*. And each of these is very complex in its nature and requires in its cultivation the exercise of all the virtues pointed out by the Ancient Sages for our attainment. "Will, do, dare and keep silence."

Some persons go through life in a semi-slumber. Every day has its own routine to be gone through as comfortably as possible and with as little friction as may be.—The next day is expected to be the same, and so on in monotonous sequence. Any change would be resisted by these men as likely to lead them into unknown fields and cause them trouble of some kind. This life may be the only one possible to the very young, the aged or the sick, but it is not the strong, robust life of Man,—“a sound mind in a sound body.”

If an opportunity of doing some great or noble deed presents itself to such men, they do not recognize it as a possibility for themselves and therefore they do not attempt it. Yet these are the very ones who lament that nothing good ever comes their way.

They do not *see* and therefore they do not *will*. Thus life's prizes pass them by.

In contrast with these there are men who are always wide-awake and full of earnest zeal in their work, whether it be mechanical or spiritual. They take a vital interest in all that is going on, and are alert and watchful for an opportunity to rise and in rising they seek to raise others also. This is the ideal.

Between these two extremes there is the class of people who are governed by their emotions and who take an opportunity or refuse it according as it seems likely to bring them pleasure or discomfort. What they desire they strive after, whether or not it is seen to conduce to the general welfare.

If we are weak we sink to class one—complain of our lot, and rebel against circumstances without trying to *see* what opportunity this change may perhaps afford us or *willing* that it shall be for the better. If we become angry, excited or revengeful then we add to our former negative attitude a dangerous and disastrous activity, thus wasting the force that should have been used in building up the new conditions and putting it to a wrong and most harmful use.

However watchful we may be, we shall sometimes be blinded, either by inertia or by our emotions and so let an opportunity slip by and escape us.

But God is Great and the Universe is Good. The weakest among us is cared for and provided, again and again, with new opportunities though he neglects the old ones. What is past is forever lost, but every new day is full of new life, and what we have refused to do yesterday we may repair today. It will be a lesser victory, it is true, still a victory!

Most of us have a very heavy burden to bear. You have your burden and I have mine. How shall we bear them in order that they shall serve as opportunities?

If God is good all is good, and these burdens must either be good in themselves or must be able to be transmuted into good. We must seek the means of transmuting them.

The first thing to be avoided is negative thought. When we are sick we must think health; when oppressed, think freedom; when worsted, dream of victory. We must recognize our position with regard to the trouble in question, whatever it may be, but only as a problem which we are required to solve. There is no calamity that cannot be transformed into a blessing by the creative genius of man, and he who so uses his opportunities is the benefactor of his race.

Nor is it in the large things of life chiefly that such victories may be won. Every day is a new beginning, every hour carries its own opportunity, every minute, rightly employed in positive creative thought, is one step nearer the heights.

If we have deliberately put out of mind all anxious thought of the burden that weighs upon us, the next step is to begin to create new and better conditions with regard to it. Instead of negative self-pity we can begin to work positively and to think creatively. Putting aside all selfish desire and personal indulgence, our eyes will open to new fields of endeavor and of enterprise. We shall recognize our opportunity and grasp it eagerly.

It may seem to us at first but a small thing that presents itself; nevertheless, however insignificant it appears, grasp it, and make the most of it with discretion and judgment. If our task is well done, a more important one will follow.

Will, Do, Dare, and keep Silence!

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The huge world that girdles us about puts all sorts of questions to us, and tests us in all sorts of ways. . . . When a dreadful object is presented, or when life as a whole turns up its dark abysses to our view, then the worthless ones among us lose their hold on the situation altogether, and either escape from its difficulties by averting their attention, or if they cannot do that, collapse into yielding masses of plaintiveness and fear. But the heroic mind does differently. To it too the objects are sinister and dreadful, unwelcome, incompatible with wished-for things. But it can face them if necessary, without for that losing its hold upon the rest of life. The world thus finds in the heroic man its worthy match and mate; and the effort which he is able to put forth to hold himself erect and keep his heart unshaken is the direct measure of his worth and function in the game of human life.

—James, *Psychology*, chap. x.xiii.

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The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown;  
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above this scepter'd sway,  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself.

—Shakespeare. *The Merchant of Venice.*

## ANNOUNCEMENT

We are glad to announce that the Oriental Esoteric Society is now re-established in its old headquarters at 1443 Q Street, N. W., having recently removed from and closed the temporary summer-headquarters at 1419 R Street, N. W. We now have a permanent home for the Work, where all the various Departments have been centralized. All BULLETIN, Library and Society correspondence, and all mail for the President, Secretary, or other officer, should be sent to the 1443 Q Street address.

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2. The privilege of sharing in a united and systematic movement to further this great work; of aiding it by individual effort and influence, or by contributing financially; and the opportunity of personal association with its leaders.

3. The receipt of such lessons as accord with the degree of membership.

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1. Student Members who receive a course of carefully graded lessons at the rate of one in six weeks, with occasional question sheets and lists of books for collateral reading. They have the privilege of sending in practical questions on the problems of life which are answered in THE BULLETIN Correspondence column, as space permits.

Dues \$1.50 a year. For countries requiring foreign postage, \$2.00.

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## MEDITATION

He who practices the virtue of Compassion enters into his brother's joy and renders it nobler; into his sorrow, and with sympathetic understanding steals away its pain. The acts and words of such a one are an inspiration to right endeavor; his friendship is a gift to be greatly prized; his presence is a benediction.

Compassion implies a certain magnanimity of soul, which makes the weak strong and imparts courage to those who were before faint-hearted. We all ascribe gentleness and kindness to the one who exercises this virtue, but the Compassionate man is also preeminently a man of strength. He has the insight and understanding to see and know that which is yet imperfect or unsound, and the will and fortitude to make it whole.

Though he stoops, he loses none of his dignity; though he touches that which is impure, his greater purity makes it clean. He is thus in truth a healer and servant of his fellowmen; and while he may not be a physician and heal the sick, he nevertheless exerts a powerful healing and uplifting influence on conditions about him. In "opening his ear to one more unfortunate than himself" he does not forget that he is the bearer of a message from those who are greater than he.

It is through our attitude toward life, expressed in the conduct of every day,—through use—that character is built. As we *think* and *act* we *become*. As we grow in holiness, our Compassion grows.

## COMPASSION

1. The disciple is untouched by attacks which are made against his personality, but his ear is ever open to the cry of one more unfortunate than himself.
2. Bow thy head and listen well, for it is compassion that speaks within thee.
3. Let not the fierce sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye.
4. Let each burning tear drop on thy heart, and there remain; nor ever brush it off until the pain that caused it is removed.
5. Inaction in a deed of Mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin.
6. Let the soul lend its ear to every cry of pain, like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.
7. O Bodhisattva—Compassion speaks and saith: "Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?"



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